

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 IO-14 DRC-01 /069 W

----- 062032

R 061508Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5895

INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

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E.O.: 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, NI

SUBJ: GOMWALK COMES TO LAGOS

REF: KADUNA 615

SUMMARY: GENERAL GOWON SUMMONED BENUE-PLATEAU GOVERNOR GOMWALK TO LAGOS YESTERDAY, PRESUMABLY TO DISCUSS CORRUPTION CHARGES RECENTLY BROUGHT AGAINST GOVERNOR. ANY DECISION ON COURSE OF ACTION PROBABLY WILL NOT BE KNOWN UNTIL AFTER GOWON RETURNS FROM VISIT TO PRC. END SUMMARY.

1. BENUE-PLATEAU GOVERNOR GOMWALK FLEW INTO LAGOS YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, APPARENTLY SUMMONED BY GENERAL GOWN. GOMWALK STATED PURPOSE OF VISIT WAS "TO HOLD CONSULTATIONS WITH HEAD OF STATE," PRESUMABLY CENTERING ON CORRUPTION CHARGES RECENTLY BROUGHT AGAINST GOVERNOR BY NORTHERN BUSINESS MEN (REFTEL).

2. BASIC DEFENSE GOMWALK HAS OFFERED AGAINST CHARGES SO FAR HAS BEEN COMPLETE DENIAL OF ANY WRONG-DOING, SUPPORTED BY AFFIDAVITS OF PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN AND BP STATE OFFICIALS ATTESTING TO GOVERNOR'S HONESTY AND PATRIOTISM. SEVERAL SOUTHERN NEWSPAPERS HAVE

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CRITICIZED THESE ARGUMENTS ON GROUNDS THEY DO NOT

ANSWER SPECIFIC CHARGES AND THAT GOMWALK SHOULD PERSONALLY PRESENT HIS OWN DEFENSE. IMPLICATION OF GENERAL EDITORIAL STANCE APPEARS TO BE THAT GOMWALK SHOULD EITHER REFUTE CHARGES OR RESIGN.

3. COMMENT: PUBLICITY ON "GOMWALK AFFAIR" HAS BEEN RISING STEADILY AND GOWON, WHO IS DEPARTING ON TEN DAY VISIT TO PRC SEPTEMBER 7 (LAGOS 7444), UNDOUBTEDLY WISHED TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH GOVERNOR BEFOR TRIP. FINAL DECISION ON COURSE OF ACTION MAY NOT BE TAKEN, AND PROBABLY WILL NOT BECOME KNOWN, UNTIL AFTER GOWN'S RETURN -- IF THEN.

4. COMPARED TO THEIR ANTI-TARKA CAMPAIGN, NEWSPAPERS HAVE TAKEN MUCH MORE CAUTIOUS STAND. STILL, IN LIGHT OF RECENT FMG THREAT OF PRESS CRACK-DOWN (LAGOS 8062), EDITORIAL REACTION HAS BEEN STRONGER THAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED.
RHEINHARDT

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, CORRUPTION, MEETINGS, PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LAGOS08411
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740249-0442
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740969/aaaacglu.tel
Line Count: 80
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: KADUNA 615
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 SEP 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <26 FEB 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOMWALK COMES TO LAGOS
TAGS: PINT, NI, (GOMWALK)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005